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# **INFLUENCE OF LIBRARY ENVIRONMENT AND USER EDUCATION ON UNDERGRADUATES' USE OF LIBRARY AT COLLEGE OF EDUCATION WARRI, NIGERIA.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated the influence of library environment and user education on undergraduates' use of the college main library at the college of education warri. The study adopted the survey research design and the population consisted of 10,000 regular undergraduates in five faculties from which a sample size of 400 respondents was selected, using a random sampling technique. The research instrument used for data collection was a self-developed questionnaire while data were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentages. The research finding disclosed the customer education methods were library orientation for fresh learners and use of library course with guided library tour. In order to study and read for exams, most undergraduates used the library daily or weekly. That college library environment was defined by excellent library building, but insufficient technological equipment to be used for electronic sources and bad network / internet connectivity to access electronic databases were some of the main problems of using the college library. The research discovered a substantial connection between autonomous factors (library environment and customer education) and dependent variable (database use); whereas both library environment and customer education contributed jointly and independently to library use among graduates. In order to sensitize more learners and draw their attention to the accessible resources and facilities, the college library environment (both inner and external) should be produced more conducive to attracting customers to the library at all times.*

**Keywords:** Library, Library environment, User education, Library use, Undergraduates

## **INTRODUCTION**

Academic libraries are facing the difficulties of underuse and apathy in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. These libraries face the daunting duties of raising awareness of the various resources accessible to their customers and how to encourage their use. Apathy for using library resources and facilities may not be unconnected with the abundance of data available on the Internet, as well as other remotely accessible electronic resources, lecture notes, recommended textbooks and other instructional resources previously available in academic libraries, but now available on the Internet. The culture of low reading among Nigerians and undergraduate learners as well as another factor that could account for the unimpressive use of academic libraries. Unless they have compelling needs to do so, most of them wouldn't use libraries. Other services for data, such as bookshops, internet cafes and computer and relaxation centers, compete for the attention of learners.

The problem of underuse of academic libraries has put pressure on library management to justify the enormous investment in them. Users have informed the administration of educational organizations that academic libraries have lost significance in today's IT-driven globe as their roles can be taken over by the Internet, as well as local networking devices and systems. Consequently, some academic institution administrators have found that less financing and growth of academic libraries should be available with the amount of data resources on the Internet. What could change users' perception of

the academic library include, but not limited to, the library environment, library use instruction, and user-librarian collaboration? The academic library environment encompasses all the circumstances, people, things, and events around the library and can have potential effects, positive or negative, on the library usage.

A library design can affect the conduct and satisfaction of customers in the same manner as a library's physical environment and organization can. Library personnel attitudes also count as they will make library services customers comfortable or awkward. Library instruction is to teach users the abilities needed to use library resources effectively. To encourage the complete exploitation of library resources and generate consciousness for the subsequent use of library resources, this is essential. It would also be difficult for academic library users to obtain their own understanding of library use. It is therefore essential to provide guidance on library use, which can be carried out most efficiently by library employees. While relating library instruction programs to the library setting, Marshall, Burns, and Briden (2007) indicated as follows:

*Library instruction programs run in the library have the advantage of introducing learners to the physical space of the library as well as intangible goods. Students can also be persuaded that the library is a pleasant and friendly place to work and that all their data needs can be helped conveniently.*

Collaboration between user-libraries can also affect the use of academic libraries. It can also foster the creation of greater library instruction norms. This cooperation is based on the mutuality in the connection between the sides of expectation, capacity, readiness and fulfillment. Academic libraries can provide collaborative possibilities and welcome user requests through the reference librarian. During the library instruction sessions or when customers seek data during the search phase, user-library cooperation may occur. Kulthau (1993) referred to this method as "Information Mediation Process,"

*Which is a method where the establishment of dialog between the consumer and the librarian is determined by a specific issue? This depends on the need for knowledge, the willingness to learn and the willingness to comprehend.*

Brunton (2007) observed the relevance of the process of information mediation as follows:

*The process of information mediation can facilitate the process of information search by allowing the diagnosis of the problem and the creation of a framework for learning effective search strategies. It can also lead customers to higher levels of trust and satisfaction. The library's importance to college graduates cannot be underestimated.*

For this reason, the Association of College and Research Libraries[ ACRL] (2011) claimed that' access to appropriate library facilities and resources is vital irrespective of where students, faculty / schools and programs are situated and where distance learning community members are entitled to library facilities and resources equal to those given for learners and faculty / school in traditional studies. Unwin, Bolton, and Stephens (1997) observed that the teaching experience of learners may be unacceptable bound and monitored without ready access to library service. Inappropriate accessibility of learning resources raises severe concerns about "providing those students the same educational prize without equal access to learning resources." Ojedokun (2000) therefore pointed out that providing students (including remote learners) with library and data facilities is central to quality education.

All libraries, especially college libraries where intellectuals are searching for data on a daily basis to advance understanding, appropriate plans should be produced to guarantee a powerful and enduring

connection with their clients that includes scientists, faculty members and most undergraduate students. The essence of such a partnership is to work with and partner with customers to design facilities that fulfill their specific information requirements, particularly in this vibrant era of data. In the college setting, undergraduate learners are significant stakeholders. They are actually the biggest proportion of the college's total population. Therefore, it is necessary to protect and well represent the interest of this group of library customers. In order not to lose them to the virtual world of internet and Google, librarians need to move nearer than ever to these customers. Establishing this type of cooperation will assist librarians gain the trust of these learners and rely on them as well, while feeling a good feeling of belonging to the setting in which they are component. Every organization, regardless of its nature and size, does not function or exist in a vacuum but in a certain setting ; and many of the forces that make up the environment generally generate certain difficulties and possibilities that directly or indirectly influence the organization's life, activities, and survival or otherwise. In order to embrace this vibrant future, librarians and information professionals must therefore be able to anticipate this evolving library environment and create vision and skills at all stages within their organizations / institutions (Njanja, 2009). Environmental impact on institutional performance and success cannot be underestimated, and organizations are beginning to acknowledge environmental performance as a source of competitive advantage, as stated by Adeoye and Elegunde (2012). Academic libraries also function within two main kinds of setting, i.e. inner and external environment, just like other company organizations. The importance of user education in the library cannot be overemphasized because there can be no link between the customers and the equipment or instruments without adequate training provided to the user who may not have any previous understanding or concept of using such equipment or instruments.

It will be wise enough for librarians to see each library user as a novice, thus providing a procedural way to educate or guide them (Akinbola, 2007). Due to the continuing proliferation of data resources and variable techniques of access, user education is needed in higher education organizations. As such, in their academic efforts, most learners face a variety of data decisions. Information is accessible through numerous channels, including libraries, special interest organizations, producers and service suppliers, media and the internet. This data, however, is progressively unfiltered, raising questions about authenticity, validity, and reliability (Abubakar and Isyaku, 2012). Effective customer education program helps build an atmosphere of friendliness where consumers and librarians see themselves as progressing partners. User education has huge advantages for both the user and the library. Ultimately, the advantages of user-library cooperation are numerous and make it easy for users to locate required materials in the library; save time for users; expose users to alternative sources of data on a specific topic of concern; enable users to use specific reference materials such as directories, encyclopedias, abstracts and indexes (e.g. science). Sensitize and raise awareness among consumers of all their library rights and privileges; and acquire the lifelong habit of self-discovery in the library and the World Wide Web (WWW). Environmental changes in the data globe are constantly placing fresh pressure on the performance and significance of libraries. Libraries, especially those within academic and research organizations, are now formulating and applying policies to reorganize and repackage the manner in which data products and services are manufactured and disseminated to customers in response to these modifications.

Emwanta and Nwalo (2013) observed that in the evolving academic setting, libraries are charged with providing data services to users. Librarians therefore need to liaise with library customers, faculties, departments, and lecturers in order to promote efficient university teaching, learning, and research. These difficulties involve user-friendly services and equipment from university libraries.

## **Research Questions**

The following are the research questions for the study:

1. What are the methods of delivering user education in libraries?
2. What is the purpose of library use by undergraduates in schools?

3. What are the characteristics of the library environment in colleges?
4. What are the challenges of using the college library by the undergraduates?
5. What is the frequency of library use by undergraduates in colleges of education?

### Method

The survey research design was used for this study. The survey method relies on a questionnaire instrument and is the most common method used in library and information science research (Aina, 2002). The random sampling technique was adopted for the study, which a sample size of 80 students for each faculty or Schools was used, and this gave a total of 400 respondents.

### Results

#### Research question 1: What are the methods of delivering user education in the college of education?

Table 1 showed the methods of delivering user education to an undergraduate in the main library of the college

**Table 1: Methods of delivering user education**

S/N	Methods of user education	Yes	No
1	One-on-one library use instruction	89 (22.4)	309 (77.6)
2	Lectures	110 (27.6)	288 (72.4)
3	Use of library course (GES 101: Use of English)	300 (75.4)	98 (24.6)
4	Library Orientation for new students	258 (64.8)	140 (35.2)
5	Guided library tour (being taken around the library to show the available resources and service	102 (25.6)	296 (74.4)
6	Basic bibliographic instruction	100 (25.1)	298 (74.9)
7	Advanced bibliographic instruction	88 (22.1)	310 (77.9)

User education programmes through the Use of library course was the most evident method. Followed by Library orientation, each of Lectures, basic bibliographic, advanced bibliographic and one on- one library use instructions was a method used to deliver user education to less than one-quarter of the students. Guided library tour was fairly popular among the students.

#### Research question 2: What is the purpose of library use by undergraduates in the college of education warri

The purpose of library use by undergraduates at the college of education warri is shown in Table 2. The most prominent purpose of using the library was to study and read for examinations. Many of the students also use the library to look for materials for assignments and to do research work.

**Table 2: Purpose of library use by undergraduates**

S/N	Purpose	SA	A	D	SD
1	To study and read for examinations	200 50.3%	140 35.2%	38 9.5%	20 5.0%
2	Find materials for assignments	138 34.7%	180 45.2%	70 17.6%	20 5.0%

3	To do serious research work, e.g. project, term paper	150 37.7%	178 44.7%	55 13.8%	15 3.8%
4	To consult reference materials like an encyclopedia, dictionaries	125 31.4%	162 40.7%	90 22.6%	21 5.3%
5	To borrow materials for academic work	130 22.7%	170 42.7%	86 21.6%	12 3.0%
6	Consult librarians for information	93 23.4%	165 41.5%	100 25.1%	40 10.1%
7	Make use of the wireless internet connectivity (Wi-Fi) on my device	28 7.0%	175 43.10%	110 27.6%	85 21.4%
8	Access electronic information resources	30 7.5%	167 41.10%	103 25.9%	98 24.6%
9	Make use of computers and internet access	46 11.6%	182 45.7%	100 25.1%	70 17.6%
10	To consult newspapers	28 7.0%	190 47.7%	105 26.4%	75 18.8%
11	Group discussion with my course mates	30 7.5%	103 25.9%	145 36.4%	120 30.2%
12	For relaxation or sleep	12 3.0%	78 19.6%	106 26.6%	202 50.8%

The purpose of relaxation or sleeping in the library is the least popular among the students as more than 70% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they do so.

### **Research question 3: What are the characteristics of library environment in college education warri**

Data in Table 3 represent the nature of the library environment in the college.

**Table 3: Characteristics of the library environment**

S/N	Library environment	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1.	Library building	70 (17.6)	200 (55.3)	80 (20.1)	20 (5.1)	8 (2.0)
2.	Seating arrangement	100 (25.1)	120 (30.2)	138 (34.7)	30 (7.5)	10 (2.5)
3.	Availability of library information resources	60 (15.1)	200 (50.3)	90 (22.6)	38 (9.5)	10 (2.5)
4.	Library furniture	60 (15.1)	80 (20.1)	193 (48.5)	50 (12.6)	15 (3.8)
5.	Library personnel	60 (15.1)	110 (27.6)	168 (42.2)	35 (8.8)	25 (6.3)
6.	The temperature within the library	49 (12.3)	80 (20.1)	180 (45.2)	70 (17.6)	20 (5.0)
7.	Lighting	60 (15.1)	75 (18.8)	134 (33.7)	80 (20.1)	50 (12.6)
8.	Décor of the library (Interior Designs)	50 (12.6)	78 (19.6)	140 (35.2)	100 (25.1)	30 (7.5)
9.	Signage within and outside the library	40 (10.1)	85 (21.4)	140 (35.2)	95 (23.9)	38 (9.5)
10.	Noise level within the Library	50 (12.6)	90 (22.6)	120 (30.2)	100 (25.1)	38 (9.5)

11.	Electricity supply	35 (8.8)	70 (17.6)	130 (32.7)	100 (25.1)	63 (15.8)
12	Internet connectivity within the library	29 (7.3)	65 (16.3)	90 (22.6)	85 (21.4)	129 (32.4)
13	Wi-Fi within and outside the library	30 (7.5)	60 (15.1)	95 (23.9)	90 (22.6)	123 (30.9)

It was revealed that among the characteristics of the library environment, the library building was rated highest. More than 90% considered the building as either excellent or very good. The seating arrangement was rated next, with about 90% of the respondents believing it was excellent or very good as well. Availability of library information resources and library furniture rated good to the seating arrangement. The least rated characteristics of the environment were Internet connectivity and Wi-Fi connections, electricity supply. Overall, there are remarkable differences in the ratings among the respondents. All characteristics received “excellent” ratings for the library building.

**Research question 4: What are the challenges of using the college library by the undergraduates?**

Table 4 showed the challenges to library use by undergraduates in the college of education warri.

**Table 4: Challenges to library use by undergraduates**

S/N	Challenges	SA	A	D	SD
1	Inadequate technological facilities to use for electronic sources	91 22.9%	154 38.7%	103 25.9%	50 12.6%
2	Poor network/internet connectivity to access electronic databases	85 21.4	160 40.2	100 25.1	53 13.3
3	Most of the library collections are outdated and not current	93 23.4%	130 32.7%	100 25.1%	75 18.8%
4	Difficulty in locating materials from the shelves	98 24.6%	100 25.1%	165 41.5%	35 8.8%
5	Poor lighting due to the epileptic power supply	80 20.1%	178 44.7%	100 22.1%	30 7.5%
6	Low awareness of the information sources and services	47 11.8%	165 41.5%	133 33.4%	53 13.3%
7	Inadequate information resources in the library	50 12.5%	118 29.6%	170 42.7%	60 15.1%
8	Inadequate reading space in the library	52 13.1%	106 26.6%	155 38.9%	85 21.4%
9	Poor customer relations among library staff	45 11.3%	97 24.4%	160 40.2%	96 24.1%

10	Inability to evaluate the usefulness of information gathered	30 7.5%	121 30.4%	151 37.9%	96 24.1%
11	Poor attitude of library staff to users	44 11.1%	72 18.1%	192 48.2%	90 22.6%
12	Lack of professionalism among the library staff	50 12.6%	93 23.4%	160 40.2%	95 23.9%

The students' responses did not discriminate widely across the numerous challenges encountered in using the library. Nevertheless, insufficient technological equipment lacking network / internet connectivity and obsolete library collections were about the biggest problems faced while the bad attitude of library employees and their absence of professionalism were deemed to be the least of all. More than half of all learners agreed or agreed heavily that insufficient technological services, bad network / internet connectivity, obsolete library collections, difficulty in finding library materials and bad lighting circumstances are obstacles to their library use. All other challenges were similarly agreed or strongly agreed upon by respondents.

#### **Research question 5: What is the frequency of library use by undergraduates in the college of education, warri**

Table 5 showed the frequency of library use by undergraduates in college education warri.

The frequency of library use to study and read for examinations far outweighs every other purpose of use among the undergraduate's students in the college.

**Table 5: Frequency of library use by undergraduates**

s/n	Frequency	Daily	Twice a week	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Never
1.	To study and read for examination	150 37.7%	90 22.6%	70 17.6%	10 2.5%	28 7.0%	50 12.6%
2.	Find materials for assignments	70 17.6%	100 25.1%	65 16.3%	50 12.6%	23 5.8%	90 22.6%
3.	To do research work, e.g. project, term paper	40 10.1%	84 21.1%	53 13.3%	31 3.8%	60 15.1%	120 30.2%
4.	To consult reference materials like an encyclopedia, Dictionaries	47 11.8%	96 24.1%	71 17.8%	13 3.3%	40 10.1%	131 32.9%
5.	To borrow materials for academic work	30 7.5%	82 20.6%	70 17.6%	40 10.1%	34 8.5%	142 35.7%
6.	Make use of the wireless internet connectivity (Wi-Fi) on my device	51 12.8%	60 15.1%	34 8.5%	30 7.5%	58 14.6%	165 41.5%
7.	Make use of computers and	18	70	53	48	47	162



	internet access	4.5%	17.6%	13.3%	12.8%	11.8%	40.7%
8.	Consult librarians for Information	36 9.0%	52 13.1%	56 14.1%	40 10.1%	63 15.8%	151 37.9%
9.	Access electronic information resources	12 3.0%	61 15.3%	48 12.8%	63 15.8%	44 11.1%	170 42.7%
10.	Group discussion with my course mates	46 11.6%	51 12.8%	50 12.6%	48 12.1%	37 9.3%	160 40.2%
11.	To consult newspapers	30 7.5%	53 13.3%	51 12.8%	36 9.0%	50 12.6%	178 44.7%

Daily use of the library to study and read for examinations was more than 30% while the purposes of finding materials for assignments, doing research work, and consulting references ranged between 12 to 25 percent in each case.

## Discussion

This section discusses the findings as revealed in the previous section based on the literature. The results are provided based on the study's goals.

### Methods of providing user education

The majority of learners were discovered to be conscious of the college library's user education. Amusa and Iyoro (2013) endorsed this with 100 percent of participants knowing about library instruction programs in their schools. The research also showed that library orientation for fresh learners, use of library course (GES 101: use of English), and guided library tour were the students' most common customer education programs in the primary library. Others, however, such as lectures, one-on - one library usage instruction, and fundamental bibliographic instruction were not common user education techniques supplied to college undergraduates. These results were endorsed by Ilo and Idiegbeyan-ose (2011) who researched the different kinds of user education available at Covenant University, including library orientation, library and study skills teaching, fundamental bibliographic guidelines, etc. Suleiman (2012) also stated that library orientation and training were among the programs that were used to improve library abilities for fresh learners. Research has evidently shown that library orientation, guided tour and library course use were the most common techniques in academic libraries for customer education programs. This was further supported by Maduako (2013), who discovered the user education programs of two educational schools to be structured in the form of library orientation, library visit, bibliographic instruction, and user consciousness. Amusa and Iyoro (2013) also discovered that the two primary kinds of library instruction programs at universities in Southwest Nigeria were familiar to most customers with orientation talk and library course.

### Purpose of library use among undergraduates

The undergraduates in the University programme and college students of warri used the library to study and read for examinations, find materials for assignments, and also to do research work, e.g. project and a term paper. They also used the library to consult reference materials like encyclopedia, dictionaries; borrow materials for academic work; consult librarians for information; make use of the wireless internet connectivity (Wi-Fi) on their devices; access electronic information resources; make use of computers and internet access; as well as to consult newspapers. Meanwhile, the library was used by only a few learners for group debate with classmates and for relaxation or sleeping. Amusa and Iyoro (2013) somehow corroborated the results, which discovered that most learners

used the library to spend time between courses, meet groups or socialize, study or read their lesson notes, as well as research.

### **Characteristics of the library environment**

The study found that the characteristics of the library environment in the college included good library building, seating arrangement, and availability of library information resources. Furthermore, library furniture, library personnel, the temperature within the library, lighting, décor of the library (interior designs), signage within and outside the library, as well as noise level within the library were all rated as good by a sizeable number of the respondents. This finding is somewhat opposite to the results of Amusa and Iyoro (2013), where most environmental indicators such as library building, accessibility, and furniture arrangement, temperature, and library decor were considered fair.

### **Challenges to library use**

Inadequate technological equipment for using electronic sources, bad network / internet connectivity for accessing electronic databases, and mostly obsolete and non-current library collections were some of the main challenges learners faced with using the college library. It was further demonstrated that difficulties in finding materials from the racks, bad lighting owing to epileptic power supply, and low understanding of data sources and services were also prominent among the problems that militated against the library's efficient use. This finding was endorsed by Edem, Ani and Ocheibi (2009), who reported that undergraduate learners were struggling to locate objects from the library collection and did not comprehend the procedures of retrieving journal papers. Lamptey (2010) further stated that the absence of contemporary teaching and crowding methods and class width were issues influencing user education and the use of library resources and services in academic libraries among undergraduates. The results also coincided with the statement by Suleiman (2012) that university learners are facing serious issues that emphasize the independence of ideas and actions. They don't understand how to handle the fresh environment; they need cautious and unique guides to assist them cope separately with different sources of data.

### **The frequency of use of library among undergraduates**

The research indicated that the undergraduates used the library mostly daily or at least twice a week to study and read for examination, as well as to find materials for tasks. It was also disclosed that most undergraduates never used the library for group debate with classmates or for newspaper consultation. It is noted that some undergraduates visit and use the library as many times as possible in a day depending on certain motivating variables, some of which included the availability of periodic energy supplies to charge and use their equipment (laptops, tabs / pads, smartphones, reading lamps, etc.). And stable access to the internet and appropriate electronic resources.

### **Conclusion**

The research found that the use of the library by undergraduates mainly depends on the different features that make up the library of the university. User education in academic library services is very important because it determines the extent to which the library resources and services would be sponsored and used by students. User education programs such as orientation, use of library lessons and guided tour allow the library to sensitize learners and generate appropriate understanding of the library's accessible resources and services to satisfy users' requirements.

The library environment and customer education are major determinants of library use among any group of consumers in a library, either collectively or independently. For example, while a library with sufficient seating room, appropriate and up-to-date data resources, excellent customer services, stable electricity supply and internet access (both inside and outside the library) will always attract

customers to the library, customers will feel so unwilling to patronize a library with bad inner and external setting. Likewise, user education programmed that is well organized will create confidence in the users, and therefore, encourage them to use the library effectively.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Considering the importance of user education to the use of the library, it is recommended that user education should be given more priority in the University library in order to sensitize more students and draw their attention to the available resources and services that can be of immense benefit to them in the course of their studies.
2. Because of the bad nature of most funds and equipment within and outside the library, students would not use the library. Therefore, the academic library environment (both inner and external) should be produced more conducive to attracting customers to the library at all times. The library leadership can add glamour to the library setting by embellishing the library atmosphere and investing in fresh techniques, and thus always attract customers to the library
3. Library data resources and facilities are produced for student use, so learners should always be in the habit of visiting the library to access specifically supplied collections and services to promote their learning and research operations.
4. Students should always create time to attend user education programmes organized by the university libraries, either as orientation or special training sessions on new services. This will give them the chance to get to know the overall library atmosphere that will further foster efficient library use.

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